DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 357 194 CE 063 582

TITLE Workforce 2001. Report by the New York State Task Force on Older Workers.
INSTITUTION New York State Job Training Partnership Council, Albany.; New York State Office for the Aging, Albany.
PUB DATE Dec 92
NOTE 33p.
PUB TYPE Reports - General (140)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; Advocacy; Age Discrimination; *Aging (Individuals); *Employment Opportunities; *Employment Practices; Futures (of Society); Job Training; *Labor Force; *Labor Force Development; *Older Adults; State Programs; Statewide Planning
IDENTIFIERS *New York

ABSTRACT

Demographic, technological, and economic changes are profoundly reshaping the ways in which employers do business, employ workers, and prepare people for the workplace. A population whose average age is increasing, combined with rapid changes in technology and the advent of global competition, challenge the country's long-term economic health. If New York and the nation are to remain competitive, they must go beyond traditional views of the work force and workplace and envision and create a more flexible, efficient, and effective labor market that better serves the needs of businesses, individuals, and society. The older worker is a valued resource who brings to the workplace qualities of maturity, experience, and stability that will be vital to this new vision. Current systems have the capacity to strengthen the work force and promote improved employment opportunities for older persons through better awareness and educational resources, innovative employment practices and training opportunities, improved work force preparation services, and more effective advocacy. In New York, initiatives are recommended for the Job Training Partnership Council, State Office for the Aging, State Education Department, Department of Labor, and Department of Economic Development. (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED357194

WORKFORCE 2001

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

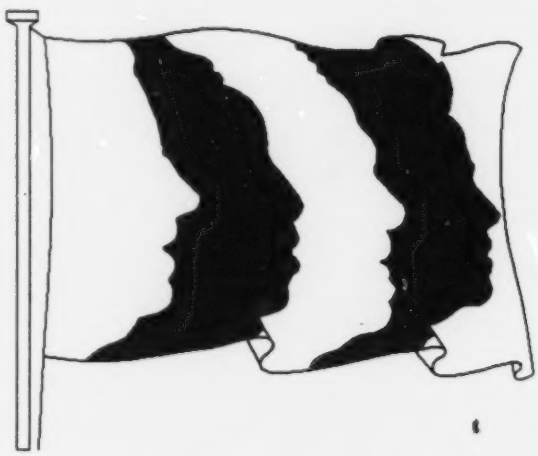
D J Gillette

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

CE063582

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WORKFORCE 2001



REPORT BY THE NEW YORK STATE TASK FORCE ON OLDER WORKERS

December, 1992

DEDICATION

The members of the Task Force want to give special recognition to the contributions made to this report by Maggie Feinstein. Maggie was an articulate and committed advocate for the elderly and their families. She made significant contributions to the development of public policy and programs to address the critical needs of our older citizens. Her untimely death is a great loss to all of us who knew her, worked with her and depended upon her wisdom and guidance.

NEW YORK STATE TASK FORCE ON OLDER WORKERS

David Gillette	Co-chair, New York State Job Training Partnership Council
Jane Gould	Co-chair, The New York State Office for the Aging
Lilliam Barrios-Paoli	New York City Partnership
Stan Breznoff	The Commonwealth Fund
Kathleen Cahalan	The Civil Service Employees Association
Ramona Calhoun	Syracuse Job Training
Maggie Feinstein	AFL-CIO: Teamsters Local 237
Livingston Francis	Associated Black Charities
Kathleen Horner	Cattaraugus Economic Development Zone
Daniel Knowles	Grumman Corporation, retired; National Council on Aging Board
Andy Leo	International Business Machines
Molly McKaughan	The Commonwealth Fund
Ed Panarello	AFL-CIO
Sharon Perkins	New York City Department for the Aging
Louis Scozzafava	Niagara County Department of Social Services
Ron Sellers	Millard Fillmore Hospital
Cynthia Welch	Search and Placement Services
Judy Clark	State Office for the Aging
John Snyder	State Office for the Aging
Doug Taylor	New York State Department of Labor
Mario Musolino	Job Training Partnership Council
Linda Phelan	Job Training Partnership Council

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page i

Dedication ii

Task Force Members iii

Table of Contents iv

Preface 1

Executive Summary 2

Guiding Principles 3

Today's Workforce 4

Issues and Recommendations .....

* Awareness and Education 8
* Employment Practices 13
* Workforce Preparation Services 16
* Advocacy 20

Recommendations for State Initiatives 23

PREFACE

In his 1990 State of the State Address to the Legislature, Governor Mario M. Cuomo called upon the New York State Job Training Partnership Council and the Office for the Aging to develop a task force to generate strategies that will increase employment opportunities for older New Yorkers and simultaneously revitalize the labor market by adding a source of skilled and productive workers.

The Task Force was comprised of individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and included private and public sector employers, older workers and individuals from economic development agencies, older worker provider groups, foundations and organized labor. Individuals were also chosen to represent large and small businesses and upstate and downstate interests.

The Task Force held meetings throughout the summer and fall of 1990 supplemented by meetings and activities on a sub-group level. Guests were invited to the meetings to present data or to provide a particular perspective. Recommendations and this report were finalized in the Spring of 1992.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Demographic, technological and economic changes are profoundly reshaping the ways in which we do business, employ workers and prepare people for the workforce. A population whose average age is increasing, combined with rapid changes in technology and the advent of global competition, challenge our country's long-term economic health. If New York State, and the nation, are to remain competitive amidst these changing forces, we must dare ourselves to go beyond traditional views of the workforce and workplace. We must envision and create a more flexible, efficient and effective labor market that will better serve the needs of businesses, individuals and society. Whether we are experiencing a strong or recessionary economy, we must capitalize on all of our strengths to build the most highly skilled workforce possible. The older worker is a resource of maturity, experience and stability that will be vital to this new vision.

Our current systems have the capacity to strengthen the workforce and promote improved employment opportunities for older persons through:

- Better awareness and educational resources,
- Innovative employment practices and training opportunities,
- Improved workforce preparation services, and
- More effective advocacy.

Awareness of the changing nature of our more diverse and aging workforce must be fostered and educational resources developed to assist employers and older persons in making better workforce decisions. Myths about older workers must be challenged and information developed on cost effective strategies for managing an aging workforce and opportunities for working past the age of 55.

Employment practices and training opportunities for older workers must be evaluated and altered. Changes in the way that we retain, retrain and hire older workers must be adopted by employers if we are to revitalize our workforce, respond to its diverse needs and utilize our older worker resource to its fullest potential.

Changes in the way we provide workforce preparation services to older adults is necessary if we are to enable businesses to adjust to an aging workforce and workers to find appropriate employment.

Finally, advocacy for these changes and awareness of the needs of the aging workforce should occur at all levels of public and private discussion and decision making.

We seek a commitment to make the changes that will help to raise the quality of the workforce for New York State's employers and improve the quality of life not only for older New Yorkers but for all New Yorkers.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Task Force on the Older Worker and Labor Force Shortages examined the barriers that discourage or prevent persons 55 years and older from remaining in or returning to the workforce. This report and its recommendations will focus on age-related barriers although we acknowledge that other societal factors, such as discrimination on the basis of race, sex or ethnic origin also seriously limit the employment opportunities available to the older person.

We have set out a list of "guiding principles" that represent the values and beliefs of a diverse group and form the basis for the recommendations presented in this report. Most importantly, the Task Force was guided by the belief that all persons who are able, regardless of age, should be encouraged to make their contribution to society through appropriate employment. Employment maintains dignity, enhances well-being and supports the integrity of a society which cares for all its people. In addition, we believe that:

- Age discrimination should be eliminated.

- The older worker is a valued resource and brings maturity, stability, skill and experience to the workplace.

- Older workers should be considered equally with all employees, regardless of age, in all aspects of employment including, but not limited to hiring, retaining, compensation, terminations, promotions, training, benefits and social programs.

- All persons should have access to employment and training services that lead to employment regardless of age and income.

- The demographic shift toward an older population requires changes in our employment policies that can only be achieved through partnerships between government, business, labor, service providers, the not-for-profit sector, community organizations, educational institutions and workers.

- Government should provide leadership to promote understanding, offer guidance and stimulate participation of all segments of society in the acceptance of older workers as productive and valued employees.

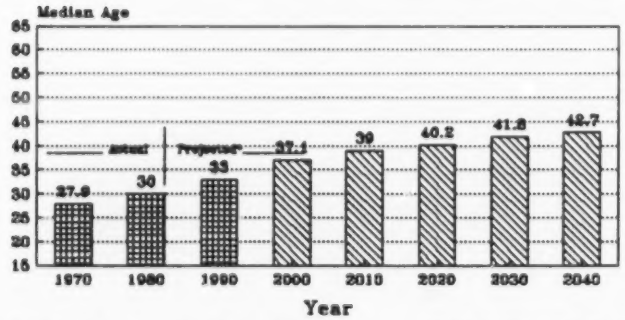
TODAY'S WORKFORCE

A gap has developed between the need for skilled workers and the supply of older persons who are both willing and able to work and able to find employment. Industry is struggling to find qualified labor to remain competitive in an economy defined by rapid changes in technology, markets and demographics. At the same time, there is a large pool of persons 55 years and older who would choose to continue working or seek employment if the opportunities were available. These trends point to the need to make the most efficient and effective use of all of our best labor resources, specifically, to re-evaluate the role of older persons in our labor market and to alter our employment and training systems to incorporate them.

Our economy has changed, and with it the way in which we employ people. Large movements in technology, resource prices and markets have resulted in a switch in industry mix and employment from production to an often highly technologically dependent, computer dominated services sector. These changes require workers and managers to develop new skills and the flexibility to adjust to continuing patterns of rapid change. Many businesses are changing their workforces to meet the new patterns of demand and technology. Employers are simultaneously terminating some workers and seeking others with different skills, relocating within the product market or relocating geographically. This pattern has been reinforced by the current recession in which downsizing has become an economic reality for many employers. The ability of business to remain competitive and improve productivity in the long run will depend upon the availability of a flexible and skilled workforce. Workers must have a strong base of skills and the ability to access continuing education and training as the nature of jobs shifts. For New York State and the nation to remain globally competitive, we need to increase our investment in and understanding and utilization of the workforce.

DIAGRAM #1

AGING OF THE POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES



DATA SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census

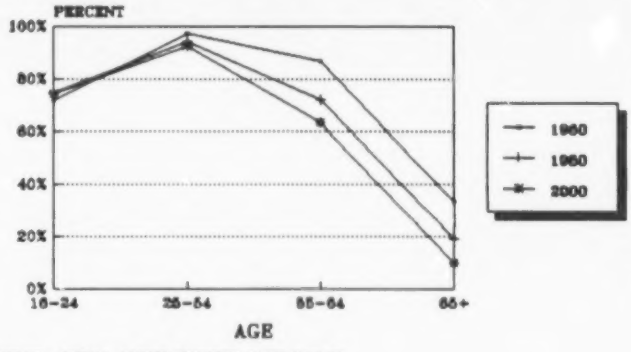
*Middle Series Projections

Our workforce has also changed. Today's workers are older and more diverse than ever before due to the aging of the population (diagram #1) and the strong influx of women, immigrants and minorities over the past 20 years. The changing

nature of our workforce presents business with an economic opportunity to harness the experience that comes with age and the creativity that comes with diversity. Despite the high unemployment rates evidencing the current recession, a shortage in skilled labor has been projected for the upcoming years and is already beginning to appear in pocket markets and geographic areas. This shortage is affected by the aging of our population, by the decreased participation in the workforce of persons over 55 years of age (diagram #2), by a decline in birth rates and by a slowing of the influx of new entrants into the workforce.

DIAGRAM #2

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY AGE
PROJECTIONS FOR MEN TO THE YEAR 2000



SOURCE: USDOL OLDER WORKER TASK FORCE: KEY POLICY ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE

The aging of the labor pool is forecast to continue well into the next century as the large baby boom cohort, born between 1945 and 1964, reaches into old age. Where one in every ten persons was 55 years of age or older in 1900, one in every five persons was 55 or older by 1980. It is forecast that in 2010, one in every four people will be 55 or older, and by 2030, one in every three people will be 55 or older. With this increase in the proportion of older persons in our population, there has been a startling increase in the exit of many workers at or before the traditional retirement age range of 55 to 65. While almost one half of the older population in 1967 spent some time in the labor force, only one in every three persons over 55 was working in 1987.

The exit of workers at an early age has become the norm rather than the exception. The loss of older workers is hypothesized to be due to many reasons, including most importantly, the increase and indexing of Social Security benefits over the last 20 years and improved pension benefits. These have decreased the poverty rate of older persons from well over the national average of 21.4 % in 1967 to 11.6% in 1986. Societal promotion of the concept of retirement between age 55 and 65 years and the coordinate lack of opportunity to continue working have also contributed to the loss of older workers in the workforce. In many cases, early retirement is a part of cost-cutting and downsizing actions by employers attempting to weather the changes in technologies, economic activity, markets and prices in the least painful way possible. This has become very common with the economic pressures of the current recession.

Many older individuals are willing, able and in need of work but confront barriers that limit their opportunity for appropriate employment. These are individuals who:

- are faced with early retirement,
- are retired and wish to reenter the workforce,
- have been dislocated or displaced,
- are discouraged from pursuing employment,
- need skills renewal, upgrading or retraining,
- wish to change their current employment status,
- are entering the workforce for the first time, and/or
- are seeking part-time work to supplement family income.

While retirement for some persons is an earned preference and for others a necessity due to poor health, for many individuals, retirement is the only option presented to them. It has been estimated by Louis Harris and Associates in a 1990 study funded by the Commonwealth Fund, Inc. that there are 1.9 million persons in the United States between ages 55 and 64 who are ready and able to work. According to Louis Harris and Associates, this statistic represents three times more persons (1,270,000) than has been estimated by the United States Department of Labor. An informal Task Force survey of approximately 1500 retirees from six unions across New York State, including the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, New York State United Teachers, Office of Professional Employees International Union, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Union, United Food and Commercial Workers and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, found that 25% were interested in returning to work and would accept training and alternate scheduling arrangements in order to do so.

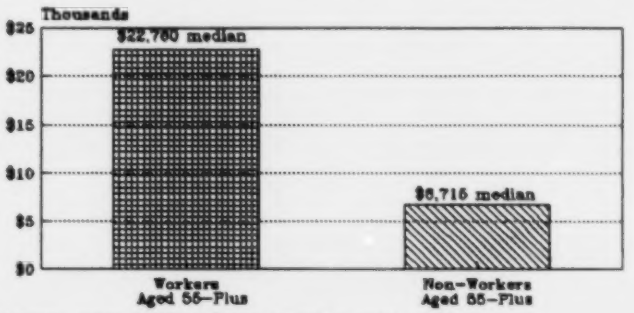
There are serious consequences of allowing this mismatch to continue in the labor market. **First, the ability of employers to remain competitive and to operate efficiently and effectively will be diminished with a seriously depleted labor force.** Businesses in America are in a new world of advancing technologies, global markets and constantly changing resource prices. In spite of downsizing and cost cutting measures that are being used to maintain a short run competitive position, the health of the business climate will depend upon the ability of businesses to find workers with strong skills in a time when new entrants to the labor force are diminished.

Second, the quality of life of many older persons will be seriously compromised with limited opportunity for earned income and job satisfaction. Older persons, in general, are at great economic risk from loss of spouse, health or job. They depend on programs such as Social Security and Medicare and often have less opportunity to find appropriate work. Indeed, dramatic differences exist in the economic status of older persons who work and those who do not. The median income of New York State older workers in 1987 was $22,760 in comparison to $6,715 for older "non-workers" (see diagram #3). Significantly, only thirty four percent of the almost four million older New Yorkers were working in 1987.

In New York State, as in the rest of our nation, the juxtaposition of demographic and economic trends could create an unprecedented opportunity. While not all older people want to be in the workforce, those that do bring desirable assets to businesses seeking more productive employees. Recent studies have shown that older workers are highly motivated, trainable and productive. Retaining these assets already in the workplace and returning those who wish to be part of the workforce should be a crucial component of any economic development strategy.

DIAGRAM #3

MEDIAN PERSONAL INCOME
WORKERS, NON-WORKERS



SOURCE: NEW YORK STATE OFFICE FOR AGING

The following narrative briefly discusses the background and presents recommendations for ways to strengthen our workforce and improve employment opportunities for older persons.

ISSUE: AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

The highest levels in business, government and labor should unite to raise the general awareness that it is good business to employ the older worker. To enhance this awareness, educational resources for employers and older persons must be developed to explain the possible options, opportunities and directions for the future.

Employing the older worker is profitable. There are proactive companies and industries in New York State, the nation and across the world that recognize the value of older employees and have begun to explore cost effective ways to better manage the aging workforce. Case studies that were recently completed by Incorporated for the Commonwealth Fund (ICF) clearly find that:

- Older workers are cost effective and productive employees,
- Older workers can be trained easily and effectively in new technologies, and
- Older workers are flexible about work assignments and scheduling.

Displays 1, 2 and 3 summarize the findings from three progressive corporations, cited by the Commonwealth Fund study. The findings refute the most commonly held myths about the productivity and profitability of employing older persons. Descriptions about the benefits of employing older persons should be available to all employers in order to raise awareness.

DISPLAY 1:

CORPORATE CASE STUDY: THE TRAVELERS CORPORATION

The Travelers Corporation, one of the world's largest financial services companies focusing on insurance, managed health care and investments, compared the cost of hiring retirees from a job bank that it established at its headquarters in Hartford, Connecticut with the cost of hiring temporary employees through an outside agency. The job bank staffs a range of positions from unskilled production to data entry to professional. The study found that:

- The job bank saved the corporation $871,000 in 1989 in agency fees and sales tax.
- The savings per hour from hiring retirees from the job bank instead of from an outside temporary agency ranged from $4 to $9.
- Use of retirees from job bank:

  1. expands pool of people available for temporary assignments,
  2. improves morale of entire workforce,
  3. capitalizes on company/employee experience,
  4. avoids additional fringe benefits costs as retirees are already covered by medical plans.

Thomas Helfrich, Senior Vice President, Corporate Human Resources:

"Our calculations have shown that this program saves the company a good deal of money and was a good investment for other reasons as well."

DISPLAY 2:

CORPORATE CASE STUDY: THE DAYS INN

The Days Inn of America, the world's third largest hotel chain with over 1,100 properties and a nationwide computerized reservation system, is an example of a corporation that has challenged its traditional ways of doing business by adjusting its policies to reflect the aging workforce. It experimented with staffing its Atlantic reservation center with older workers. An analysis of the productivity at this site conducted by ICF, Incorporated for the Commonwealth Fund found that:

- The average cost per hire of an older worker was about one third that of a younger worker. Older workers stay on the job much longer than younger workers with a resultant decrease in average training and recruiting costs for the company. The average cost per hire was $618 for an older worker compared to $1742 for a younger worker.
- Older workers were trained to operate sophisticated computers in the same amount of time as any other worker, 2 weeks.
- Older workers were better sales people. Although older workers took longer to handle each call than younger workers, they booked more reservations and therefore generated more revenue.
- Older workers participated in all three shifts.

John Snodgrass, president and chief executive officer of Days Inn:

> *"Based on our positive experience, many of our hotels nationwide have also hired seniors. The Fund's case study gives new dollar figures that provide unequivocal proof of their value to this company."*

DISPLAY 3:

CORPORATE CASE STUDY: B & Q PLC

B & Q plc, the United Kingdom's largest chain of Do-It-Yourself stores (hardware, construction equipment and housewares) with 280 stores, 15,000 employees and $1.6 billion in revenue, analyzed the productivity and profitability of a store, staffed only with workers aged 50 years and over, in Macclesfield, England. It found that in comparison to five similar stores staffed with younger workers:

- The store staffed with older workers only was 18 percent more profitable.
- Employee turnover at the older worker store was nearly six times lower.
- Older workers at Macclesfield were flexible and ready to fill staffing needs, including averaging 8 overtime hours per month.
- Older workers at Macclesfield were absent 39 percent less.
- Leakage (difference in inventory due to theft, damage, inventory not received) at the older worker store was less than half of the comparison stores.
- Extra training was not required for the older employees.

Jim Hodkinson, chief executive of B & Q plc:

> *"The results have major implications for senior management in deciding about future recruiting, training and staffing. The great results at Macclesfield have led us to open another older worker store, at Exmouth."*

Myths about the older worker must be confronted. Too often, older workers have been subjected to the public perception that they are not productive or profitable employees. As a result, they have suffered age-related discrimination. As early as age 45 and markedly at age 55, an individual can begin to confront limited opportunities for appropriate employment. If businesses are to avail themselves of the best labor pool possible, and if older persons are to compete in the marketplace as any other worker, the myths about older workers must be erased.

A broad based multi-media campaign about the aging workforce should be developed to confront these myths. That campaign might include some of the following: a booklet about the older worker that demonstrates why it is good business to employ the older worker, debunks the myths about the older worker, instructs employers on how to do a workforce utilization analysis, and directs employers to resources for more effectively utilizing the aging workforce; a series of business roundtables; national media attention directed to issues of the aging workforce; a portfolio of activities, testimonials and photos of corporations in New York State that have been proactive and successful in their use of the diverse and aging workforce. This portfolio would be showcased to employers around the state.

As society becomes more aware of the issues associated with the aging workforce, educational resources must be developed to propel employers and older persons from awareness to action. It is clear that maintaining older individuals in the workforce is good business practice and beneficial to the worker. For employers to take advantage of this opportunity, appropriate adjustments to the corporate culture and organizational structures must be made. Information should be developed that describes profitable employment policies for a diverse and aging workforce and explains how these policies can be implemented to increase flexibility and productivity. In many cases, lack of information on cost effective options limits corporate action. In the current recession, for example, many companies have had no choice but to target older workers for early retirement as a downsizing option. Employers do have a choice however about the package of early retirement benefits offered. Offers should include linkages to other jobs or careers and money for retraining tuition. This kind of investment in the workforce is provided by Japanese companies to retiring executives as part of doing business. Resources that inform and broaden the range of choices confronting the employer should include references and information on how to:

- retain older workers in difficult economic environments,
- train and retrain existing employees, and
- recruit productive and well-trained older workers.

In addition, older persons must have access to information on employment and retirement options in order to make cost effective workforce decisions. For older persons to take advantage of employment opportunities, resources must be developed that include references and information on how to:

- evaluate options for continued employment,
- obtain training and skills improvement,
- deal with age-discrimination,
- acquire employment counselling and assistance, and
- find a job.

It will take the leadership of persons in government, business, labor and education to bring attention and resources to bear on this issue and foster changes in attitudes and expectations about older workers. Although government cannot accomplish this goal alone, the State of New York can begin the process by calling upon the following agencies to coordinate an effort to mobilize each of the sectors:

- The Department of Economic Development (DED) as the respected arm of government for communication with business,

- The State Office for the Aging (SOFA) as the link between government and our older population and their families,

- The Department of Labor (DOL) as the link between government, business and workers,

- The State Education Department (SED) as an important link with resources for training and education,

- The Job Training Partnership Council (JTPC) as the link between state agencies and the workforce preparation network, and

- The Governor's Office of Employee Relations.

RECOMMENDATIONS: AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

RECOMMENDATION:

The State of New York, under the direction of the Office of the Governor, should raise the public's awareness that it is good business to employ the older worker through a broad based multi-media campaign.

RECOMMENDATION:

New York State should develop a series of reference materials to be made available to employers on how to effectively and efficiently manage an aging workforce that includes cost effective options for retention, retraining and recruitment of older workers.

RECOMMENDATION:

New York State should develop a series of reference materials to be made available to older persons on workforce opportunities and resources.

ISSUE: EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Employers should re-evaluate the way in which they structure and utilize their workforce if they are to remain competitive in an economy defined by rapidly changing markets and technologies.

As the nature of our workforce changes, employment practices must change if we are to make full use of all of our best labor resources. There are cost effective strategies which take advantage of the aging characteristic of our workforce and enable employers to increase productivity and profitability by expanding opportunities for:

- Retaining and hiring persons 55 years of age and over,
- training and retraining, and
- increasing career mobility.

Retaining and hiring the older worker can be cost effective. The Days Inn, for example, found that the cost of training and recruiting older workers was half that of what it was for others because older workers tended to stay on the job so much longer (Display 2). Offering a menu of scheduling and benefit packages can enhance an employer's ability to both hire and retain older workers. The flexibility created through a menu enables the employer to match job requirements with a worker in a cost effective manner and enhances an employee's ability to continue working. Retaining a skilled worker can indeed be a more economical employment practice than recruiting and training a new employee. Hiring practices which include alternative scheduling and benefits can expand the pool of skilled workers available to an employer. Expanded options available to an employer to hire or retain a worker include:

- more flexible scheduling and staffing arrangements, including flextime, compressed work weeks, part-time work, job sharing and home-based work,
- programs which allow employees to gradually transition from full employment to retirement by decreasing responsibilities and/or changing positions,
- elective or flexible benefits packages,
- retiree job banks, and
- consultant contracts with retirees.

Training and retraining employees allows an employer to respond to changes in the economy brought on by new technologies and markets. It can be more cost effective over time to invest in an existing workforce than to continually recruit and train new workers.

A ready and skilled workforce capable of responding to constant advances in technology and changes in markets must be supported by a system of continuing training and retraining either within the company or the community. These opportunities should be available to all employees regardless of age.

Providing opportunities for career evaluation and development can not only increase an employee's contribution to the company but can also facilitate an easy transition to a bridge career. IBM is among the corporations that have been progressive in exploring alternative employment policies and developing replicable ways of providing innovative employment and training services to their employees. It has, for example, developed a program which offers tuition reimbursement for college credits to prospective retirees and spouses in order to develop bridge skills to transition to other careers.

It is critical that employers look to the community and other systems to find reference materials and services if they cannot be developed in-house. Community colleges and other elements of the education and training system can be vital links to ensuring that employers are able to meet the employment and training needs of their employees. Many community college programs have already begun to provide a vital link to help older people prepare for and find linkages to jobs in their local communities. Westchester Community College, for example, has been successful in working with MONY to train older people in office and customer service skills. This kind of program between industry and elements of the educational system can serve as a model both for employers and educators. Employers should also reach to unions, community organizations and local governments to build a coordinated system of resources, points of access and services either at the workplace, in the community or through state systems that will support the most skilled workforce possible. Finally, employers should work with the State of New York to explore ways to support employer investments in the workforce including tax incentives for training and retraining workers.

RECOMMENDATIONS: EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

RECOMMENDATION:

Employers in the public and private sectors should re-evaluate the way in which they structure and utilize their workforce in order to include increased opportunities at the workplace or in the community for:

- retaining and hiring productive employees through exploring alternative scheduling, staffing, workplace and benefits options,
- training and retraining to continually upgrade skills, and
- increased mobility through career development and the building of transitional bridges.

RECOMMENDATION:

Employers should work with The State of New York to investigate ways to support employer investment in training and retraining its workforce including, but not limited to, the use of tax incentives.

RECOMMENDATION:

Employers should work with community colleges, unions, community organizations and local governments to establish the links between older adults, employers and services in the community and provide, either at the workplace or in the community, the identified services and training.

ISSUE: WORKFORCE PREPARATION SERVICES

To strengthen its global competitiveness, the State of New York should adjust its system of employment and training services to meet the needs of an aging workforce.

Just as employers should invest in their workers, so should our workforce preparation systems support these efforts to remain competitive. This means that the State of New York should work with employers and providers of services within the community to develop a system of services that will benefit all employers and employees. This would include the development of continuing opportunities for workers of all ages and incomes to train, retrain and access job services throughout their working lives. In addition, the State of New York should work with employers to explore ways to support employer investment in the workforce.

Our workforce preparation systems should include services for older individuals with different levels of need. For many older persons, the elimination of age discrimination or biases in employment decisions and the availability of services related to training, retaining and hiring would remove sufficient barriers to allow them to compete in today's labor market. For other workers the ability to access specialized employment and training services, such as skills assessment, job seeking skills and job placement, is critical. For these persons, the opportunities currently presented by the employment and training and education systems are insufficient.

An older adult seeking a job or about to end current employment may have outdated skills, high unit wage expectations, face age discrimination or be discouraged. These individuals need a full continuum of specialized employment services. Although the five components of a service delivery strategy remain the same, regardless of the population being served, the effectiveness of the strategy is often based on its ability to tailor approaches and methods to the target population - in this case, older adults. **Support and counselling** are critical to those older persons who lack the self confidence and esteem needed to find a job or have unrealistic expectations of employment. **Assessment and case management** is needed to match an older adult's skills, interests, resources and needs with an available job and to assist the individual in negotiating an often complex system of services. **Job training** is often needed to update or improve job skills to enable the individual to compete in today's rapidly changing markets. In addition, there are older workers who may have been out of the job market for years and may need a broad range of **job seeking skills** that include: resume writing, interviewing, dealing with discrimination and job search. Finally, the older adult can need direct assistance with **job placement**.

In addition, a successful employment and workforce preparation system should provide appropriate support services for the older worker. Important attributes of successful support

services would include, for example, adult day-care for dependant spouses or parents, transportation assistance and part-time job training opportunities. Service providers should be urged to seek training on how to provide the components, approaches and support services in order to more appropriately and effectively serve the older population.

The older worker who cannot find these specialized services either through the state, in the community or at the workplace is likely to become discouraged and to withdraw from the labor market. For many older adults "retirement" is a more comfortable label than "unemployed," in spite of the equivalent hardships that both conditions may impose. Once separated from the workforce, the older worker is even less able to re-enter or to get the employment and training services that might prepare him or her for a job.

There are many players in the spectrum of employment and workforce preparation services that could be encouraged to provide better services for older adults. These include state agencies, businesses, organized labor, local governments and community organizations. If New York State is to prepare a ready and skilled workforce, it is essential that all of these sectors work together to offer appropriate and accessible employment services for the older adult.

Specifically, New York State can increase opportunities for older workers to access employment, training and education services by encouraging the appropriate state agencies to:

- direct more attention to the older worker,
- develop more aggressive and appropriate outreach and recruitment techniques,
- reevaluate income qualification restrictions to eliminate barriers to older worker participation in workforce preparation programs,
- redesign service delivery models to be more appropriate for the older adult, and
- coordinate information about clients, resources and program availability.

The state systems that prepare our workforce need to be encouraged to focus more attention on the older adult population as an emerging demographic force. As stated throughout this report, a shift in focus to include the older population, must take place from both the policy development and service delivery perspective if our systems are to be effective. All state agencies in the workforce preparation system should be urged to serve the older adult. There are four primary agencies in New York State that can link older adults to workforce preparation services and jobs through state and federally funded programs. These include: the State Office for the Aging (SOFA), the State Education Department (SED), the Department of Labor (DOL) and the Department of Economic Development (DED). In

addition, the Job Training Partnership Council (JTPC) plays an important role in coordinating the workforce preparation system. A concentrated and integrated state system, combining successful practices of already existing programs, should be developed and implemented to serve the older worker.

Outreach and recruitment techniques used by providers of services within the workforce preparation system should be more aggressive and appropriate for the older population. Service providers traditionally oriented to serving a younger population often do not know how to target older persons. Programs should be redesigned to provide access into the workforce preparation system from more age appropriate points including, for example, churches, libraries, supermarkets, bus routes or active volunteer networks. Service providers should be encouraged to seek and apply more effective models of outreach and recruitment.

All older persons should have access to employment and training services regardless of income. Many older persons are excluded from workforce preparation services because of inappropriate income eligibility restrictions associated with programs targeting the economically disadvantaged. It is usual practice for eligibility tests to exclude income from public assistance but to include part of Social Security income. This policy ignores the subsistence nature of Social Security income. It is therefore possible for a person on public support to qualify for employment and training services and for an equally in-need person receiving Social Security benefits not to qualify for services.

There are many older persons in need of services who do not fall within income eligibility guidelines but who need employment and training services. Our systems of education, employment assistance and economic development should be encouraged to integrate the concept of ***lifelong learning*** into their programs. This would allow persons of moderate means, regardless of age, who are willing and able to have the opportunity to train for and obtain suitable employment.

State agencies should be encouraged to coordinate their efforts to develop and deliver effective services for the older adult. In many cases, the services that could help the older adult are already in place, but the linkages among providers are missing. Each agency and corresponding providers represent a network for outreach and recruitment, a menu of services, resources and funding streams and an array of best practices pertaining to the older adult. Often however, persons can go unserved because of inadequate referral mechanisms, insufficient program funds or inappropriate service design. In order for the workforce preparation system to work effectively and efficiently, providers should be urged to work together and develop clear lines of communication in order to centralize information on client referral, funding streams and best practices. For example, employment programs for an older person could work with Area Agencies on Aging for assistance with adult day care or transportation services; Area Agencies on Aging could refer clients to the workforce preparation systems; and community colleges could link providers, clients and local businesses through their delivery of educational programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS: WORKFORCE PREPARATION SERVICES

RECOMMENDATION:

The Governor should direct all state agencies involved with workforce preparation to refocus and coordinate their efforts to address the needs of our aging workforce. Programs should be made equally available and more appropriate for older adults. Agencies involved include the Job Training Partnership Council, the State Office for the Aging, the State Education Department, the Department of Labor and the Department of Economic Development. Suggested state agency activities are outlined in the section of the report entitled "Recommendations for State Initiatives."

RECOMMENDATION:

The Human Investment Subcabinet, as the Governor's advisory group on human resource development issues, should develop a human resource policy that would create a system of lifelong learning for all New Yorkers regardless of income or age. This would provide an education-training/ counseling/ placement continuum for all New Yorkers. The Governor's Coordination and Special Services Plan should be a vehicle for the articulation of these policies.

ISSUE: ADVOCACY

There is a need for ongoing older worker advocacy at the local, state and federal levels in order to enhance employment opportunities and conditions for older persons.

Labor force policies need ongoing adjustment to reflect the demographic and economic realities presented by our aging workforce. Advocates knowledgeable about the aging workforce are needed to help bring about changes that could improve not only the economic well-being of the older worker and the labor climate for business but also the fiscal well-being of our State. Advocacy should occur in the private sector, in the development of state programs and policies and in a federal arena.

Employers, business associations and organized labor should advocate for more effective workforce utilization. Activities should include discussions of aging workforce issues, workforce utilization surveys, sharing effective strategies, participating in job fairs and sponsoring and developing corporate initiatives that would promote better recognition and utilization of the older worker. These activities would include private industry councils, the Business Council of New York, central labor councils and local Chambers of Commerce, etc.

New York State can serve an important advocacy role by ensuring that aging workforce issues have a productive forum for discussion and possible action. In addition, the State of New York can play a critical role by setting precedent or by taking a leadership stand on national concerns. For example, while Social Security Insurance has provided older persons with more financial security, the program includes disincentives, in the form of the retirement earnings test, to older worker participation in the labor market. This and other issues may have a significant impact on an older person's decision to work and should be investigated and resolved.

RECOMMENDATIONS: ADVOCACY

RECOMMENDATION:

All state level advisory committees, councils and boards on employment, training and education should include an older worker advocate to represent aging workforce issues, to review service delivery and to recommend policy on older worker employment issues.

RECOMMENDATION:

Employers, private industry associations and councils and unions should recognize the older worker as a valuable labor force resource, initiate discussions of our aging workforce and develop initiatives that would facilitate better utilization of the older worker.

RECOMMENDATION:

All federal and state policies and laws should be examined to eliminate barriers which may inhibit older workers from remaining in or returning to the workforce. This should include, but not be limited to, an examination of the Social Security retirement earnings test.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATE INITIATIVES

THE JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL (JTPC) should work in conjunction with administrative agencies, eg. State Offices For Aging, Department of Labor and State Education Department to expand services to the older worker. In addition, the following programs and initiatives should be examined for their ability to serve the older worker:

- **Disregard of Social Security in the means test for accessing services under JTPA funded programs:** The Job Training Partnership Council should recommend to the Governor that Social Security income be disregarded 100% in determining eligibility for JTPA funded programs.

- **Title IIA:** A portion of JTPA Title IIA funds are available for serving individuals with multiple barriers to employment but who may not necessarily be economically disadvantaged. The Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) should be encouraged to explore the feasibility of using these monies to target the older worker.

- **Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Assistance Act (EDWAAA):** Services to the older dislocated worker through this funding source are currently below their expected proportionate incidence in the population. Services should be expanded to more closely reflect the actual incidence of older worker dislocation by making local level decision makers, who are involved in the process, aware of effective and productive options for the older worker. The Service Delivery Areas should receive technical assistance from the State Office for the Aging in order to assist the response team in developing productive and appropriate options for the older worker.

- **GATEWAY:** The Job Training Partnership Council has proposed and the Human Investment Subcabinet is developing GATEWAY, an interagency coordination concept designed to integrate current employment and training programs into one client network of comprehensive services. The older adult should be specifically included by involving the State Office for the Aging in the state level planning stages and by involving older worker advocates and service providers in the local level pilot projects. In addition, initiatives should be explored at each of the GATEWAY sites for developing a multi-source funding base for older worker initiatives.

- **Coordination:** The Job Training Partnership Council should ensure that older worker program operators are informed of the availability of programs and funding streams on a regular basis by notifying State Office for the Aging of any activities that could have the potential to serve the older worker.

THE STATE OFFICE FOR THE AGING (SOFA) should expand services to the older worker by providing improved linkages between employers, the older worker and the older worker provider network. In addition, the following programs and initiatives should be examined for their ability to serve the older worker:

- **Information:** Resources should be developed to train providers of employment and training services about appropriate outreach and recruitment techniques, services products and employment options for the older worker.

- **Title V of the Older Americans Act (OAA):** State Office for the Aging should work with Job Training Partnership Council to advocate and develop policies which permit the ability of persons to transfer between Title V and Job Training Partnership Act funded programs in order to access the most appropriate program.

- **Computerized job bank services:** State Office for the Aging should seek a means to offer access to Department of Labor computerized data base on jobs and educational and training opportunities to older individuals. One way to do this would be to develop the capacity at the AAA sites and seek training through DOL.

- **Referral and Employment Network for Older Workers (RENEW):** Currently Department of Labor employs individuals over 55 years of age on a part-time basis to provide employment assistance to older workers at DOL regional Job Service sites. The program is funded with Federal Older Americans Act Title V monies. State Office for the Aging should work with Department of Labor to evaluate the program's effectiveness and, if appropriate, expand this program.

- **Coordination:** State Office for the Aging should provide on-going information to the older worker provider network on the availability of programs and services that might be directed towards the older worker. In order for State Office for the Aging to provide this information, agencies including State Education Department, Department of Labor, Job Training Partnership Council and DED should inform State Office for the Aging on a regular basis about the various opportunities, grants and activities that their agencies could offer the older worker.

THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (SED) should encourage the provision of services to the older worker by the State University of New York/City University of New York systems, community college system and local school districts. In addition, the following programs can be examined for their potential to serve the older worker more effectively and efficiently:

- **Adult Centers for Comprehensive Education and Support Services (ACCESS):** There are 14 ACCESS centers operating through BOCES, Community Colleges or larger school districts across the State that could be encouraged to serve the older worker through literacy or vocational education programs. This could be accomplished by making the provision of older worker services at these centers a requirement for certification as an ACCESS center. To serve the older worker, the ACCESS center could link with service delivery areas for funding through the JTPA 3% Older Worker programs and with the Area Agencies on Aging or a local national contractor for Title V monies.

- **Vocational Education:** Larger school districts, BOCES should be encouraged to provide services to older adults by requiring school districts to include services to older workers in their comprehensive plan.

- **Employment Preparation Program (EPE):** Local educational facilities should be encouraged to serve persons over 50 who lack the basic skills to compete, regardless of educational experience. This could be accomplished through a change in the state funded EPE allocation formula which would allow school districts to earn EPE dollars for serving the older adult. It is proposed that a weight of 1.25 be applied to services extended to the older worker and that there be a change in the qualification restrictions to allow older workers to qualify for these services.

- **Coordination:** The State Education Department should ensure that older worker program operators are informed of the availability of programs and funding streams on a regular basis by notifying State Office for the Aging of any activities that could serve the older worker.

THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) should encourage the provision of services to the older worker. In addition, the following programs should be examined for their ability to serve the older worker:

- **Community Service Centers:** A counsellor specifically trained in older worker placement and counselling, such as those persons that currently operate at five sites under the Senior Citizens Employment Opportunity Program (SCEOP), should be available at each Community Service Center site.

- **Computerized Services:** Older worker access to Department of Labor computerized data base on jobs and educational and training opportunities should be expanded to include availability at Area Agency on Aging (AAA) sites, Community Service Centers, libraries, BOCES, Community Colleges, etc.

- **Apprenticeship Programs:** Department of Labor should encourage the inclusion of older individuals in local trade and union sponsored apprenticeship programs as mentors, teachers and instructors. There should also be increased effort to include older individuals as apprentices. Department of Labor should ensure older worker participation in apprenticeship programs by including an older worker advocate on apprenticeship advisory councils.

- **Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Assistance Act (EDWAAA):** Department of Labor should provide information to local rapid response team planning sessions about appropriate employment options for the older dislocated worker. Department of Labor should work with State Office for the Aging to develop this.

- **Coordination:** Department of Labor should ensure that older worker program operators are informed of the availability of programs and funding streams on a regular basis by notifying State Office for the Aging of any activities that could have the potential to serve the older worker.

THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (DED) should encourage the provision of services to the older worker. In addition, the following programs should be examined for their ability to serve the older worker:

- **Skills Training Programs:** Older workers should have access to skills training programs at the workplace. One way to encourage this would be to require grantees of employer specific skills training programs to plan to serve older job seekers as part of the approval process for the grant.

- **Coordination:** The Department of Economic Development should ensure that older worker program operators are informed of the availability of programs and funding streams on a regular basis by notifying State Office for the Aging of any activities that could have the potential to serve the older worker.

- **Entrepreneurial programs:** The Department of Economic Development should extend the opportunities for entrepreneurial training and support to older individuals.

recycled paper

BEST COPY AVAILABLE